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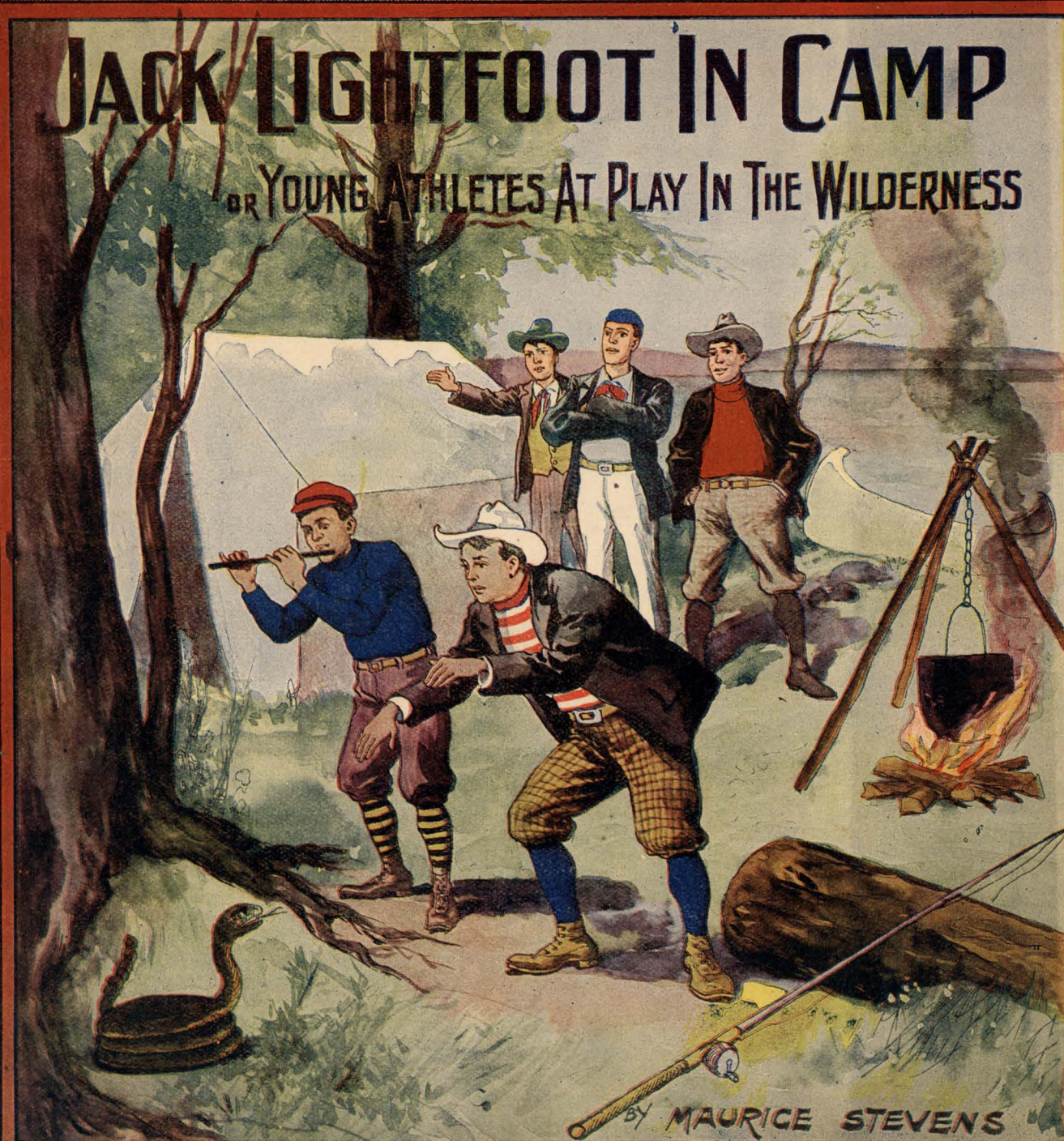
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# ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY



## JACK LIGHTFOOT IN CAMP OR YOUNG ATHLETES AT PLAY IN THE WILDERNESS



BY MAURICE STEVENS

While Gnat piped to beat the band, Lafe, as the snake charmer, went through with some mystic passes, but the angry rattler only shook his pepper box louder than ever.



**Publishers' Note.** "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

# ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 20.

NEW YORK, June 24, 1905.

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## Jack Lightfoot in Camp;

OR,

### Young Athletes at Play in the Wilderness.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

#### CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

**Jack Lightfoot**, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

**Tom Lightfoot**, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

**Lafe Lampton**, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

**Jubal Marlin**, **Wilson Crane**, **Gnat Kimball**, **Ned Skeen**, **Saul Messenger**, **Phil Kirtland** and **Brodie Strawn**, some of the Cranford fellows who were in camp with the Lightfoot boys when the strange series of events chronicled in this narrative took place.

**Delancy Shelton**, a dude stopping at the aristocratic hotel on the lake.

**Reel Snodgrass**, a young fellow who appeared in Cranford with a Hindoo magician, and claimed to be a nephew of the millionaire Mr. Snodgrass.

**Lily Livingston**, a girl whom Jack snatched from the water when she was in danger of drowning.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON LOON LAKE.

Jack Lightfoot and his friends, in bathing suits, were splashing the waters of the little cove, or bay, that made an indentation in the shore line of Loon Lake.

They were at some distance from Cranford. The setting of Loon Lake was the wilderness that lay to the northward and westward of Cranford Lake.

If one could have passed over this wilderness and this lake in a balloon he would have observed that the lake resembled a blue diamond in a setting of dark emerald.

At the upper end of the lake, less than a mile away, was a large summer hotel.

In addition to this structure, which was a great, sprawling building, painted a pure white, there were scattered, here and there, houses, with cleared farms, and, in addition, a sawmill.



the story of Boralmo, that Reel was a Snodgrass and the son of his brother who had died in India.

Boralmo had been detected by Jack while trying to rob the private safe of Mr. Snodgrass, but had escaped, and Reel had likewise disappeared.

To meet Reel again, in this way, was, therefore, astonishing.

Reel did not recover consciousness for some time after the shore was reached, for Jack and his friends had to resort to heroic treatment to bring him back to life.

As for the girl, she had not been in the water so long a time, and regained her senses more quickly.

It was learned that she was stopping at the summer hotel with her mother, and that her name was Lily Livingston.

Reel stared and looked very foolish, when he knew who had rescued him, but as far as talking was concerned he might as well have been an oyster. He scarcely made use of enough words to thank Jack and the others for what they had done.

He seemed to want to get back to the hotel, declaring that he must have some dry clothing or he would be sick, so Jack and some of his friends accompanied Reel and the girl there, while the other boys went after the overturned sailboat, for the purpose of bringing it ashore.

When Jack and his companions got back from the hotel the sailboat had been towed ashore, bailed out, and was lying in the little cove beside the rowboats.

"We didn't finish that tug-of-war," said Gnat Kimball.

"We'll postpone that finish to some other time, when we're not so tired," Jack answered.

He hastened to put on his dry clothing, for he had gone to the hotel in his wet bathing suit, due to the haste with which the girl and her companion demanded to be escorted there.

All the boys, after getting into comfortable garments, lay round on the shore talking over the wreck and the rescue, and of Reel Snodgrass, as well as the story of his recent stay in Cranford.

"I wonder if the Hindoo is at that hotel?" said Tom.

"I don't think so," Jack answered.

"You don't know that he isn't?"

"I don't think he would stop so near Cranford. He would be too afraid of being arrested."

"But Reel is here."

"We never had any direct proof that he was mixed up in that robbery of Snodgrass' safe, so nothing could really be brought against him."

"I'll bet if the Hindoo isn't there Reel knows where he is," said Lafe.

"All the same, Reel and that girl came nigh going to the bottom of Loon Lake and staying there," declared little Gnat.

"But Jack was on hand, as he always is," said Phil Kirtland, not able to conceal a twinge of jealousy.

Why had he not been first to reach the girl and make that rescue? She was a pretty girl, he had seen, and the praise that some of the boys wanted to heap on Jack—to say nothing of certain warm compliments and thanks from the girl—filled him with a certain small envy.

"I'd like to have a talk with Reel," observed Tom, thoughtfully. "I almost wish he hadn't left Cranford."

"Why?" Lafe asked. "He's no good."

"But think of the information a fellow could get out of him! What doesn't he know about jugglery and hypnotism and all the tricks those Hindoo jugglers and magicians use? And, then, think how much he must know about India, having lived there nearly all his life! He knows the city of Bombay almost as well as we know Cranford. I've been reading up on Bombay and the East, since he was here, and also some things about those jugglers. They're mighty clever men, if the things written about them are only half true."

"He was a clever man, all right!" cried Brodie, who had taken no part in the conversation until now. "A fellow who could hypnotize old Snodgrass as he did has got to be clever. Snodgrass is as close as the bark on a tree, yet see how that Hindoo made him open his purse."

"And how Reel hypnotized Jack!" cried Kirtland, in a peculiar tone.



"Howling mackerels! that was funny!" Skeen exclaimed.

"It was," Tom admitted. "Almost too funny to think about."

Jack's face had flushed and he looked undeniably chagrined.

"I didn't find it funny," he said, pointedly.

"He really hypnotized you, you think?" asked Kirtland.

"I guess he did; yes, I know he did."

"He couldn't have done that to me," Kirtland boasted.

"Talking about that spill out there and the rescue," said Lafe, anxious to help Jack, "suppose a man was out in a boat with his wife and his mother, and the boat should go over, and he could rescue only one of them, which do you suppose he'd save?"

"By granny, I don't know," replied Jubal. "If he stopped to take time to think about it he'd let 'em both drown."

"I think he'd save his mother," said Lafe, burrowing lazily into the warm grass. "You see, he could get another wife!"

"But suppose it was your wife and your mother-in-law?" cried Kimball, "and your boat hit a snag and went down?"

"In that case," said Skeen, who "hated" girls, "I think I'd save the snag; the world is full of women and girls, and they're always getting people into hot water. If that fellow hadn't been out sailing with a girl he wouldn't have gone into the lake; he'd have been watching the weather and his boat, instead of looking at the girl."

"Hello, there's a cake of soap floating out there!" cried Kimball. "Did that come from the sailboat, or is it ours?"

Jack smiled when Kimball dashed to the shore and came back with the cake of soap he had rescued.

"Fellows," said Jack, still smiling, while he burrowed into the grass as lazily as Lafe, "that came from the sailboat, and it shows what a silly chap Reel Snodgrass is. He could have saved himself with that."

"How?" cried Gnat, as he put the soap down. "He couldn't have done any such thing."

"Howling mackerels! no," said Skeen. "What could he have done with that cake of soap?"

"He could have washed himself ashore," Jack answered.

Whereupon Skeen took up the soap and threw it at him.

"That makes me weak," said Gnat, dropping down.

"Yet there must be strength in soap," said Jack, humorously, pulling his cap down over his eyes to shut out the glare of the sun; "it will make soapsuds strong."

"Great hemlock!" cried Jubal. "Somebody hit him!"

"Speaking of strong things," remarked Lafe, quietly, "I saw two of you fellows do a thing a while ago that I would never have believed possible. It was the limit of strength."

"What was that?" asked Jack, though he knew a joke was coming.

"They took a boat and pulled up the lake."

While Jack and his companions were lying by the lake talking and joking, some time later, and discussing the singular reappearance of Reel Snodgrass, whom they had believed far away, Reel came in sight, accompanied by a youth of about his own age, who wore a light flannel tennis-suit, a light-colored yachting cap, and swung a cane.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### LOUNGING BY THE LAKE.

It seemed to be merely the purpose of Reel Snodgrass to get another look at Jack and his party and of their camp in the woods near the lake, for he and his companion passed on, some distance away, without venturing to speak.

Yet Jack and the boys saw both Reel and the youth with him cast staring glances at the camp.

"I wonder why Reel hasn't sent anyone down to see about his boat?" Jack questioned.

"He don't like our crowd," said Tom.

"He liked it well enough once," observed Gnat. "He was bound to get in with us—just crazy to."



"Things air different naow," Jubal declared.

Then they spoke of the Hindoo and Reel Snodgrass, with a good deal of comment concerning Reel's performance while he was a member of the Cranford baseball nine.\*

Reel had turned traitor, and, for a money consideration, it was thought, had repeated Jack's signals during the progress of a game, thus giving the opposing team a great advantage, until his treachery was discovered.

"Well, he done that thing mighty cute!" declared Jubal. "And I reckon he got a heap o' money fer it. They dew say that a big pile was up on that game in bets. He got some o' that bettin' money."

"But the side he tried to favor lost," argued Skeen.

"I bet he got his pay, all right."

Money considerations always interested Jubal, though somehow he seemed unable to work out any of the schemes that came to him so plentifully.

"Speakin' of money," he went on, "I was readin' t'other day 'baout an extension bat, that if a feller could make and sell I allaow he could make a mint of money, er he might make money by helpin' tew win games with that bat."

"Oh, you've got bats in your belfry!" said Skeen.

Jubal grinned.

"Well, naow that bat has been bumpin' raound in my belfry a good deal, sense I read abaout it. It was a great thing. It was jist an ordinary bat sawed in two, and a piece of extension steel put in there, with a hidden spring set in the handle, and a ring o' rubber raound the outside. It was made so that nobuddy could tell it was in two parts. But when the batter went to swipe at the ball it was easy to press the spring and make the bat six inches longer. There's times, yeou know, when a good, long bat would be a great thing, but the rules won't let yeou have a bat only jist so long."

"Would you make and sell that bat?" said Tom.

"By granny, if there was a lot o' money in it I would. What would be wrong abaout it?"

"Tell us more about the bat," said Jack, smiling.

"Well, this feller that I read abaout had it and could swipe a ball that was beyond the rubber, if it suited him tew."

"I should think he'd let it go by, in an honest way, and have a ball called against the pitcher," said Jack. "If he drew four of them he'd get a pass to first."

"But if the ball suited him he might land it over the fence and make a home run! This feller did more'n once. Jist snapped the bat out to its extra length, swatted the ball, and when he tossed the bat down nobody could guess what he'd done to it. Struck me as ruther cute."

Jubal chuckled as he thought of the batter shooting the extension bat to its extra length and getting a great home-run hit.

"Oh! that was just a yarn!" Tom declared. "You can't believe half you read nowadays."

"Well, then, consarn ye, why do yeou waste so blamed much time in readin'? But the feller that worked the bat got inter a lot of trouble at last, through fergitfulness. Ye see he seen the ball comin'. It was beyond the plate, but jist his kind, and he knowed he could land it over the fence fer a homer. The catcher was standin' up close—right behind him—and there's where the feller's trick fell daown, fer he fergot that; so, when he swung back to crack at the ball, pushing the bat aout to its full length, the blamed bat, bein' so long, hit the catcher on the mask. That knocked off the mask, and the flyin' mask struck the ball. The feller with the bat thought he'd hit the ball, and he flew fer first. If he could have made that homer the game would 'a' been a tie in the last half o' the ninth, but the umpire called him out fer interference and give the game to the other side. And what was wuss, the catcher, knowin' naow that something was wrong, cracked him over the head with that bat, nigh abaout killin' him and breakin' the bat right where it was sawed. And that's haow the secrit got aout."

"Do you believe that?" said Tom.

"Well, it was in the paper—I read it!"

"I read as funny a one as that," said Jack; "perhaps it was in the same paper. This bat had been damaged a little, and that gave the team using it an excuse to

\*See No. 18, "Jack Lightfoot's Dilemma; or, A Traitor on the Diamond."



tack some leather on it. This leather they soaked in water till it was sopping wet, and had the sucking principle of those leather suckers with which things can be picked up. When the ball came against that bat it clung, and the batsman was able to 'pull it,' so that he could make a place hit in any part of the field he wanted to."

"Do yeou believe that?" asked Jubal. "They wouldn't allaaowed a bat like that on the field."

"I believe it as much as I believe the other."

"There's one thing I've been thinking about," said Tom, "and it's come to me since the Hindoo and Reel Snodgrass cut their capers down in Cranford. That Hindoo, and Reel, too, had the ability to hypnotize people. It's said, in some of the books I've been reading on the subject, that there is strong grounds for belief that the Hindoo jugglers are able to hypnotize a whole crowd—all the people before them—so that what seems miracles in the way of tricks the people merely imagine they see."

Lazy Lafe looked interested.

"If that's so I can guess how that thing was done by the Hindoo that day at Snodgrass'. Jack and I saw the Hindoo make a little tree grow up out of the floor. Reel threw a cloth over the spot, and when he lifted it a sprout of a tree was there. He did that several times, each time the tree being bigger. The last time when he took off the cloth stood a little, full-grown apple tree with apples growing on it. They were apples, for I ate one of them."

"He had you hypnotized good," said Kirtland, "if you really ate an apple when there wasn't any!"

"What I was going to say," continued Tom, with a smile, "is that if it is true that a fellow with that power can hypnotize a lot of fellows at once, he could hypnotize the batters so that the ball as it came in wouldn't look bigger than a pea, and——"

"Oh, I been hypnotized that way more'n once!" shouted Jubal. "Sometimes it come in so goldarned swift I couldn't see it at all."

"It would be better," Jack suggested, "to have the hypnotizer exercise his powers on the umpire. He could make the umpire only see things favorable to his side and not see things that were against his side."

"Huh!" said Wilson Crane. "I've been up against umpires like that already, and so has the whole Cranford nine. But nobody thought they were hypnotized."

"They were simply hypnotized, like Jube is," said Phil, "by a love of money, so that they were unable to tell when a thing is dishonest and when it's straight goods."

Jubal flushed.

"What I think about this hypnotism business," Phil went on, "is that if a fellow has a good, strong mind, a mind that can't be swayed by anyone that comes along, nobody can hypnotize him."

Was this an unkind cut at Jack?

Jack freely admitted his belief that he had been hypnotized by Reel Snodgrass.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SOME GUESTS OF THE HOTEL.

When no one came to get the sailboat, Jack Lightfoot and his cousin Tom agreed to sail it up to the hotel and deliver it there to the owners.

The time was now afternoon.

The boys had passed most of the forenoon in lounging talk, in various kinds of water sports, and in swimming and diving stunts.

Lafe Lampton, who loved to cook, as he did to eat, had prepared, with the help of some volunteer assistants, as good a dinner as could be expected out in the so-called wilderness.

The boys thought nothing ever went better than that dinner, and they praised Lafe so much for his skill as a cook that he was almost vain. The fish had been done to a turn—the Johnny cakes were excellent, and there had been various dishes of wild berries which the boys had gathered in the woods and along the fields of the nearest farm.

Jack and Tom did not set out for the hotel for some time after dinner, for they liked to lie about in the shade and talk.

But now they were ready, the boat was pretty well dried out, so they hoisted the sail and set out.

"Here's that cake of soap," said Nat, running up



with it and tossing it into the boat. "You fellows may meet with an accident and want to wash ashore."

"It's funny that Reel, or some one, hasn't come down to ask about the boat, or to get it," said Tom.

"He's ashamed, or afraid, to come down," was Jack's answer, as he tilted the tiller and let out the sheet of the sail, sending the boat bowling along under the gentle breeze that rippled the blue water.

After turning the nearest timbered point of land, the white hotel came into view.

Sailing up to the wooden landing, Jack brought the boat round with a deft turn, and Tom leaped from the bow with the painter and made it fast.

Then they both went ashore.

Scarcely had they set foot on land when Reel Snodgrass appeared, accompanied by the youth they had seen with him before—a dudish fellow, swinging a cane.

"Aw!" said this youth, poking the cane at Jack. "Is he the fellow that pulled you out?"

Reel Snodgrass had flushed strangely.

"Why did you bring the boat?" he asked. "We intended to send for it soon."

There was something very irritating in his manner and words. He seemed to have forgotten that these boys had saved his life that morning.

"I think you hypnotized us," said Tom, who had been made angry by Reel's manner. "We just couldn't stay away."

"We thought the boat ought to be brought back," Jack explained.

"Aw! we don't care to have you up here, y' know!" said the other, whose name was Delancy Shelton.

He was a swell youth, with a faint mustache sprouting, which he fondled and pulled at.

"You've got such a common crowd with you down there, don't y' know!" he explained, insolently, when Jack stared at him.

Jack saw that Reel Snodgrass was showing as much insolence as this callow, pin-feather specimen of a dude, and when he made that discovery Jack's anger flamed.

He had gone to the rescue of Reel Snodgrass and

the girl, and he and Tom had kindly brought back the boat, to meet a reception like this.

"I think you're a scoundrel!" he said, speaking to Reel, while his gray-blue eyes blazed suddenly.

Jack's temper was often of the peppery sort, likely to explode like a keg of gunpowder and scatter things.

He took a step toward the two youths, with his hand clinched.

Reel backed away, but Delancy Shelton went him one better, for he hopped behind Reel. Putting up his cane, he roared:

"Aw! don't let him come nearer! Hit him, Reel!"

"You're backing him, I see!" observed Tom, sarcastically.

"You called me a scoundrel," said Reel, bristling.

"I did," Jack answered, "and you are one. You haven't a manly principle about you, to speak as you've done after what we fellows did for you to-day."

"Aw! hit him, Reel!" cried Delancy, swinging the cane, but taking good care to keep behind his champion.

"Ask him what's become of the Hindoo?" suggested Tom, with a malicious laugh.

"I don't care to have anything to do with you fellows!" cried Delancy. "I spit on you, don't y' know!"

But he didn't make the attempt.

"You'll have to teach him the spit ball, Jack," cried Tom, still amused, but more angered.

"Do you know what I think of you?" said Jack, shaking with anger, and speaking to Reel. "The fellow who would work his way into a baseball nine, gain the confidence of its members, and then sell the signals to the opposing team, is too low and contemptible for words to express. And that's what you did."

"Aw! hit him, Reel!" cried Delancy.

"You didn't talk that way—wouldn't talk that way—while you wanted to get on the good side of my uncle," Reel declared. "You can say that out here when there's two of you to——"

"Hit him, Reel! I'm here!" reminded Delancy.

"You can say that to me here——"

Jack, his anger flashing again, seemed about to jump at him, when Tom caught him by the shoulder.

"I read something the other day, which is as old



as the hills, for it's in the Bible: 'He that controlleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city!' Cool down, Jack."

"Oh, I shan't touch him—not now—unless he strikes me first. But I wanted to tell him what I thought of him."

"Not now?" said Reel, made bolder by the words. "What do you mean by 'not now'?"

"Simply that I've got a better grip on myself than I had. But I want you to keep out of my way hereafter. I want you——"

There was an interruption. A sound of swishing skirts came, and a girl ran down from the hotel along the path that led to the lake, followed at some distance by an elderly woman.

The girl, who was old enough to consider herself a young lady, was Lily Livingston, whom Jack and his friends had that day saved from a watery grave in the lake.

She stopped, in pained surprise, when she saw the angry attitude of the boys.

Jack turned to her with clearing face, while both he and Tom doffed their caps.

"We came over with the sailboat," said Jack, as she came up looking curiously at Delancy and Reel.

Delancy, inspired by her presence, stepped out from behind the protecting shadow of Reel Snodgrass, and swung his cane menacingly.

"I'd like to hit you one, don't y' know!" he said, waving the cane. "Perhaps you think I can't fight, but I'd have you know that I can. I took lessons of a man in New York, don't y' know; and if you come near me, blawst me, if I don't hammer your head off!"

"Why, Delancy!" exclaimed the girl. "These are the young gentlemen who saved us from the lake!"

"We brought the boat up from the camp," said Jack. "No one came for it, so we concluded at last to sail it over."

Lily Livingston belied her name. Her cheeks were not white, like a lily, but red—an attractive red, and her skin was an athletic brown. She was seventeen, perhaps—an athletic girl, who wore tan shoes, white skirts, a russet belt and a sailor hat. Altogether she was a nut-brown maid with peony cheeks, who looked

extremely attractive, as she stood eying Reel and Delancy, Jack and Tom.

"I must thank you for that," she said, speaking to Jack and Tom Lightfoot, "and I must thank you again for getting me out of the water. Ugh!" she shuddered a little. "It makes me feel dreadful, when I think of that experience, and I try to keep my mind off it."

Delancy was advancing, flourishing his cane.

"It's all very well for you to say that, Miss Livingston, and thank them, don't y' know, but they weren't invited to come up here, don't y' know."

She smiled charmingly on Delancy.

"But if they choose to come, Mr. Shelton? We wouldn't be so rude as not to give them welcome."

"We can be going," said Jack, whose cheeks grew as red as those of Miss Livingston. "We only came to bring the sailboat. And we're sorry if we've intruded."

"Not at all! You haven't intruded. Delancy, will you be a gentleman and stop flourishing that cane?"

"He'd have hard work trying to be a gentleman," said Tom, contemptuously.

She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Now, you fellows are going to be friends!" she declared. "I won't have anything else. They call me The Queen at the hotel, and the queen, you know, must always be obeyed. No quarreling now. Why, Delancy, I'm surprised."

"I don't care," drawled Delancy, still holding the heavy cane as if it were a cudgel. "A beastly, blooming lot, don't y' know—village boys, don't y' know, living in a camp out by the lake, right in the woods."

"Delancy—that is, Mr. Shelton, thinks you ought to be at the hotel; he has a poor opinion, it seems, of people who rough it."

"It's my observation," said Delancy, trying to look wise as he delivered this opinion, "that people who camp out, don't y' know, merely claim that it's because they like camping, aw—don't y' know! The trouble is that they're not able to stay at a good hotel, don't y' know."

"I'd need wages to stay at any hotel where you were putting up," said Tom, again with infinite scorn.



"Now, now," said the girl, "please don't! I'm going to be the friend of all of you. May I walk with you along the lake?"

"Certainly," said Jack.

"Come along, then. We'll leave these naughty gentlemen to their own bitter thoughts. I want to thank you, and thank you, over and over again, for saving me to-day."

Jack was glad to turn away. The elderly woman was approaching. He did not care to have more words passed there by the lake.

"You mustn't pay any attention to what Delancy and that other young man says," Lily Livingston begged. "They're angry now. They'll get over it and be sorry."

"What have they to be angry about?" Jack asked. "I never saw that fellow Delancy before."

"I heard Reel say that he didn't like your crowd; you had some trouble, I think, in Cranford. He has an uncle there."

"He's been talking about that?" said Tom.

"Why, I heard of it there myself."

"There, yourself? Then you've been in Cranford?"

"Been in Cranford! Why, I live there now. Haven't you heard of the Livingstons, who moved into Cranford, into the large house at the upper end of the town?"

It was the turn of the boys to be surprised.

"Why, yes," said Jack, "I heard of them; they came for only a few days, and went away again."

"We're out here for the summer, or for a few weeks," she answered. "So, you see, as we're all Cranford people, and I'm a Cranford girl, I don't want any quarreling between Cranford people."

"But the other—Delancy?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Shelton. He's a very close friend of ours."

Jack wanted to say he didn't think much of her friend.

"And Reel?" said Tom.

"Is a guest at the hotel."

She changed the drift of the talk, turning it to the lake and the woods, to the grass and the flowers, to boating and yachting, to athletics; and altogether

talked so charmingly, and with such a determination to make herself interesting, that almost before they knew it the walk was ended and they were near the camp.

"We've let you come too far," Jack protested.

"Too far? I wish it had been twice as far. So we're at the camp! I didn't get to look at it—wasn't in a condition to, you know—when I was here before. What on earth are those boys doing?"

## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT THE BOYS WERE DOING.

Jack and Tom had been brought to the sudden realization that they were near the camp by the cheering that all at once arose from the lake out in front of it.

Stepping to one side now, so that they could see past the tents to the lake, they beheld a sight that was somewhat puzzling.

Every boy in the camp was in bathing togs and out on the lake standing up. Two were swimming furiously. The others were shouting or laughing.

Jack and Tom saw instantly that the boys were arranged on the lake as if engaged in a game of baseball. There were no lines to mark the outline of a diamond, but there seemed to be undeniably the three basemen, with a pitcher in position, a catcher in place, and a man in front of him with a bat.

The batter and the catcher were standing on a rather large float made by towing the landing stage out a short distance from the shore and anchoring it there.

The pitcher stood in one of the boats, which had been anchored. The first baseman stood in the other boat, which was also anchored. The perch of the second baseman was a log, anchored in position, and that of the third baseman was another log.

There was only one fielder, and that was Ned Skeen, who played shortstop on the regular Cranford nine. He had a floating log to stand on, but was now swimming toward a white rubber ball that bobbed on the water not far from him.

The other swimmer was Jubal Marlin, who was spurting through the water toward first base.

Apparently Jubal had been at the bat, had lined



the ball out into the lake, and was trying to reach first before Skeen could field the ball.

All the boys were roaring and shouting advice to the swimmers.

Skeen got the ball and, turning round, tried to throw it to the man on second.

The man on second reached out to receive it, when his log turned and he went down out of sight like a diving turtle.

Jubal gained first, where he climbed up into the boat, ready to make a flying swim for second base at the first opportunity.

The bases were not far apart, and a special rule applied, to prevent anyone from sending the ball too far out into the water. If it went beyond a certain point the batsman was out.

The boys all yelled again when they saw Jack, and began to shout to him that they wanted him to umpire the game.

"It's water baseball," said Lily Livingston, her red cheeks glowing. "How clever! I never saw anything like it. I must see this."

She ran to the lake, where, standing by the tent in her white dress, sailor hat and tan shoes, she made a very effective picture, a thing she knew and desired.

"No man aout, and I'm on first," shouted Jubal, from the boat. "This is the first innin'. We ain't got enough men to make up too hull nines, though. But it's fun."

"They ought to have more players," said the girl, enthusiastically. "Couldn't you two young gentlemen play? I'll umpire the game. I'm a regular baseball fiend. I'll be fair in my decisions. Oh, if you could! This is elegant."

Jack and Tom disappeared within one of the tents and came out soon arrayed in their bathing suits, and were assigned positions in the play.

"Water baseball," said Wilson, "is great."

The ball came into Lafe, who was catching.

"Water you giving me?" he howled, as it flew wild.

Instead of nines, "sixes" were being played, or were now to be played, and Jack and Tom were ready to enter into the new sport with hearty hilarity and good will.

The "Divers" were at the bat, and the "Loons" were in the field—or, rather, in the lake.

And this is the way they lined up, and the list of names hastily penciled and given by Jack to the umpire, Lily Livingston:

DIVERS.	LOONS.
Jubal Marlin, 1st b.	Ned Skeen, ss.
Saul Messenger, 2d b.	Brodie Strawn, 1st b.
Bob Brewster, 3d b.	Phil Kirtland, p.
Mack Remington, ss.	Nat Kimball, 3d b.
Jack Lightfoot, p.	Wilson Crane, 2d b.
Tom Lightfoot, c.	Lafe Lampton, c.

"We've got two special rules," said Phil, who was pitcher, speaking to the red-cheeked umpire—"had to have 'em, you know; a batter is out if the ball goes beyond a line drawn between those two flags out there, and every pitched ball is a strike if it comes within possible reach of the bat."

"I've always wanted to be an umpire," said the girl, with enthusiasm, "and now I am one."

She looked at the batting list.

"Mr. Messenger is the next man up."

The bat was a round stick shaved with knives from a pine board, and it was light as punk. The ball was light, too, being of rubber and hollow.

Saul was already in position on the float with his bat lifted.

Kirtland sent the ball in wide. It seemed too far out, but Messenger poked at it—he was afraid to strike hard, lest he should land it beyond the flags and be out.

And those flags! The boys would not have put them there if they had known that a visitor was to appear, for they were stockings stuck on the ends of poles.

"One strike!" said the girl, dancing with excitement.

"Haow in time is a feller goin' to git a start fer a steal?" Jubal questioned, from his place on first.

"Get down into the water," some one shouted at him.

"By hemlock! I think I could git a better start by divin'!"

But Jube slipped into the water, with his hand on the edge of the boat.

When, on the third pitched ball—they were easy



pitches—the batter hammered it out, knocking it into the water near the pitcher's position, Jube made a furious splashing, as he started for second, which was but a few yards away.

Phil Kirtland dived for the ball, and coming up with it threw to second; and Jubal was out, for the ball beat him.

"Great hemlocks!" he sputtered, blowing the water out of his mouth as he swam back to the boat. "I'm fust man aout, by gum! And I calc'lated I'd make home on that."

"Next man up—Bob Brewster," said Lily Livingston. "Say, this is the funniest game I ever heard of!"

Brewster sent the ball over second.

Long-legged Wilson Crane was on second, and he leaped into the air.

He caught the ball, and fell with it with a splash into the water, going down out of sight.

But when he came up he held up the ball, shaking his head to free it of the water.

"Batter out!" shouted the girl, marking on a bit of paper, for she was keeping score as well as umpiring. "That was a great catch. You boys are regular water dogs."

"Too bad to call any of us dogs," said Jack, with a light laugh.

"Well, you know what I mean—water dogs are great swimmers. I'll call you bears, though, if you'd rather; bears are great swimmers, too—polar bears are."

"We're birds," said Jack, "loons and divers."

"And this is a bird of a game!"

"Yes, it is—great!"

"Two men out now," she announced. "And one man on first."

Then Mack Remington, unable to get the "wide" balls, which the umpire insisted he ought to reach, struck out.

And Jack and the other members of his "six" went into the field—or, rather, into the lake.

The fun was fast and furious.

In a little while, by some strenuous work and place hitting two men were on bases—on first and second.

They were Brodie Strawn and Phil Kirtland. Ned Skeen was out.

"Keep it up," chirped little Gnat Kimball, as he swung the light bat and shook the water out of his hair. "There isn't any bird can beat a loon in the water. Remember, you fellows, that we are loons."

"Looneys, you mean!" cried Tom Lightfoot, behind the bat.

"You must get the balls closer in," the umpire warned; "his arms are short."

"Don't slander me," said Kimball; "I didn't make myself."

The infectious character of this novel sport, and the brightness of the girl who stood there on the bank umpiring, made everyone feel in a light and joking humor.

"Yeou need that extension bat, by hemlock!" howled Jubal, and then "haw-hawed" at his joke.

Jack sent in a ball Kimball could get, and he landed it straight in Jack's hands.

"Thanks," said Jack. "That was a nice present."

The umpire shouted merrily:

"Batter out. Wilson Crane at the bat."

"That fellow doesn't need an extension bat," cried Kirtland. "You can't get the balls so far out that he can't reach them."

Wilson rewarded him with an unpleasant look.

But again a bright remark from the umpire smothered what might have been a flame of anger.

Wilson hammered out the rubber ball, sending it almost to the flag-line limit, and the swimmers on first and second dived into the waves and began to swim with all their might for second and third, which they reached.

When, a little later, Brodie tried to go home on another ball batted out, the shortstop who fielded the ball fairly turned a somersault and went under in his attempt to throw; and Brodie made a "home swim," coming in, to the thunder of great applause.

"Get into gear, you fellows!" Jack shouted. "We're being done up."

"Water of it?" Tom shouted at him.

"Water kind of work do you call this?" some one else shouted.



"I'm a loon-atic if I know," came back.

"Suppose the ball fills with water and sinks—there's an air-hole in it, ye know?" asked Jubal.

"Question for the umpire," said Jack. "What if the ball sinks?"

"It won't sink—if it does we'll take for a ball the head of the player who lets it sink."

The decision was cheered.

Then Lafe came to the bat and knocked a ball down to the first base.

While he was plunging along for first, and the other base swimmers were doing their stunts, threshing through the water like porpoises, the man c' first—Jubal—stretched out his hand to get the ball, and the boat tipping, went over into the lake head first.

When he came up and put his hand on the boat Lafe was also clutching the other side.

"Judgment!" yelled Jubal.

The girl laughed merrily.

"Safe on first! And another run."

Phil Kirtland had arrived home.

"Say," said Jubal, shaking his fist at her good-naturedly, "somebody's been buyin' yeou off with choc'late caramels, and I know it."

"If you'll buy me a box I'll give all my decisions in your favor. Next man up. Let's see, who is it? Oh, yes, Mr. Strawn."

"Mr. Strawn" took his position and fanned out.

"Three men out!" she cried.

And thus the game went—a five-inning game.

Such another game had never been played by the Cranford boys, and with so charming and merry an umpire they were sorry when it closed.

But the umpire declared she must hurry back to the hotel, and the game ended.

"Score," she said, reading from her score card. "Loons two runs, Divers one."

Jack asked her to wait until he and some of the boys could dress, and they would accompany her to the hotel.

But just then the dude, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Randolph Livingston, came into the camp.

Mrs. Randolph Livingston seemed to be in an unamiable and irritated mood.

"Lily, I'm astonished!" she declared. "Down here at this camp, and I've been looking for you everywhere. And so has Mr. Shelton—just everywhere!"

"I'm ready to go now," said the girl, demurely, with a smiling glance at Jack. "So, Delancy was searching for me?"

"Everywhere, y' know!" said Delancy, glaring haughtily at the dripping boys who were scrambling to land.

"Except in the right place! Didn't you hear the shouting, Delancy? You might have known, if any fun was going on, that was the place to look for me."

"But this camp, and these—aw!—ordinary cweatures!"

He glared his cheap contempt.

"Delancy, don't be comical!" she said, sweetly; and, taking his arm, moved off along the lake side.

"I don't think I like her as well as I did," said Skeen, when he saw that. "I was thinking that here is one girl worth knowing, and now see that! Oh, I hate girls, anyhow!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### SNAKE CHARMERS.

Scarcely were the three out of sight, hidden by the trees, when Reel Snodgrass, approaching from the opposite direction, came to a point where he could see the camp.

The boys were in their tents, dressing.

Reel took a position where he could look into the camp, and squatted down by a tree.

There was a peculiar and unpleasant light in his eyes.

He sat there for some time watching the boys as they appeared one by one.

Finally he beheld something that stirred his curiosity, and he arose to get a better view.

Lafe Lampton, strolling out from a tent, had discovered a rattlesnake in the very edge of the camp.

"Say," he said, shouting his discovery, "I wonder if we couldn't work that snake-charming trick we saw the Hindoo do?"

The rattler sounded its warning, and the boys stood back.



Little Gnat Kimball dived into a tent and came out with an old fife.

"We'll try it," he cried. "I saw that trick, in the show at the hall, you know."

"Sure, you can do it," said Tom, laughing. "Jack and Lafe saw the trick at Snodgrass' house, too. Charm it, Lafe."

Lafe was inclined at first to deny that he was a "charmer," but when little Gnat piped up with the fife Lafe concluded to try his hand, "just for the fun of the thing."

While Gnat piped to beat the band, Lafe, as the snake charmer, went through with some mystic passes, but the angry rattlesnake only shook his pepper box louder than ever.

"Give him another tune," Jack suggested. "Maybe he'd like the 'Highland Fling.'"

"No, he's a Yankee rattlesnake," said Jubal; "play him 'Yankee Doodle.'"

Gnat tried the "Fling" and the "Doodle," but the snake declined to be charmed.

"You fellows aren't charming enough," said Jack. "Try something else."

They tried other things—"Nellie Gray," "The Old Folks at Home," and even "Hiawatha," but his snakeship was obdurate.

"Try a club!" said Brodie.

"And spoil the fun?" said Jack.

After looking at this singular performance for a time, a sneer crossed the face of the watcher—Reel Snodgrass—and, rising from his seat by the tree, he walked boldly into the camp.

"Is it a snake?" he asked.

"Yes, a rattlesnake!" came the answer, though the boys were surprised to see him there.

"Give me that, and I'll show you something," he said to Kimball; and Nat passed him the fife.

He tested it, while the snake still vibrated its rattle.

"The tone is too sharp and high," he said. "You need an instrument that will make a soft note, but I'll try it. I could work it, I know, if I had a Hindoo pipe."

"Any of you fellows smoke?" asked Lafe. "Give him an American pipe."

"Perhaps a cigarette will do," suggested Wilson, making a pretense of searching for one.

Reel flushed slowly, but said nothing.

Approaching the angry snake he began to make a soft note with the fife—as soft as he could get out of it.

The attitude of the snake seemed to change at once. It drew its head well back within its coils, and after a while its pepper box stopped that warning vibration.

"He's hypnotizing it," whispered Lafe, pinching Jack on the arm.

Phil Kirtland was watching the performance with uncommon interest. He had always said he believed Jack had not been hypnotized by Reel Snodgrass.

"Well," he announced, as Reel continued his piping and the snake became quiet, "I've always maintained that when anything is hypnotized it's something that hasn't any brains!"

Reel flushed again, but made no other sign that he had heard.

The snake soon lay as if dead, still coiled, but without motion or indication of life.

Still softly piping, Reel Snodgrass stooped with a quick motion and caught it by the back of the neck, close up to the head; then he lifted it, squirming, and held it in his arms.

"Ugh!" grunted Mack Remington. "Pap says that when you fool with a snake you're likely to get bit; but he wasn't really thinking of snakes when he said it."

The excitement of what he had witnessed had made Mack's apple-red cheeks redder than ever, until they glowed like a pair of ripe Baldwins.

The sun was near its setting.

"I thought I'd come down and see how you fellows were getting along," remarked Reel, as cool as the proverbial cucumber.

Jack and some of the other boys wanted to kick him out of the camp, yet they restrained themselves.

Jack was anxious to know more about the Livingstons and Delancy Shelton.

Reel dropped down by one of the tents, with the snake held in his arms. It was noticed that he did not



release his hold of its neck, and so long as he held it that way it could not possibly bite him.

"You're well acquainted with those people up at the hotel?" Jack asked, nonchalantly, as if searching for some subject of conversation.

"I think I ought to be," was the reply, almost in an insolent tone.

"That Lily Livingston seems to be a fine girl," Jack ventured. "She was down here a while ago."

Reel's interest quickened.

"That so?"

"Then her mother and that dude, Delancy, appeared, and she went back to the hotel with them."

"So?"

"And we had the goldarnedest game o' ball—water baseball—with her umpirin' fer us!" said Jubal, hilariously.

"That so?"

"Is this Delancy, the dude, related to her?" Jack inquired.

"He'll not feel good if he hears you call him a dude."

"Then I shall take pleasure in calling him that the next time I meet him. He's an insufferable cad and fool."

"Think so?"

"I know so."

"He's rich."

"That doesn't change the matter."

"It does, with some people. He's not related to the Livingstons, except very distantly—a third or fourth cousin, I think—but he's going to marry that girl, just because he's rich."

"You don't mean it?" gasped Bob Brewster.

"I mean what I say, generally. Her mother thinks there never was such another fellow as Delancy—because he's got the stuff, you see."

"If a fellow is rich, he can be a fool, or anything else, and some people will flatter him!" was Tom's declaration.

"Yes, I guess that's so."

He was silent a moment, looking at the snake.

"Perhaps you're curious to know why I came down here. The reason is, that I've determined to go back

to Cranford, when the Livingstons go, which will be shortly. My uncle lives there, and I've as good a right to be there as any of you fellows."

"No one has said you hadn't," Jack retorted.

"And I want to explain to you, and declare to you, that the things you think about me are all mistakes. I never sold out that game of baseball, as you think I did; and the Hindoo—who has for so long been my best and almost my only friend—never tried to rob that safe."

"I saw him!" said Jack, quietly.

"He got out of that safe only money that he had put in there himself, and the combination of the safe had been confided to him by Mr. Snodgrass so that he could go into it whenever he chose."

"Then why did he run—cut out that way in the night, and never come back?"

"Mr. Snodgrass will understand that, too, when I explain it to him; and it is to him that I shall make that explanation. Now, as I've said, I'm going back to Cranford. I'm going to live there with my uncle. The question between us is whether when I do go back there I am to be a friend of you fellows or otherwise? I'd rather be your friend."

"Do you think you deserve our friendship?" Jack asked. "We're sure you sold those signals and tried to throw that ball game. I'm sure the Hindoo took money from that safe which he had no right to, whatever Mr. Snodgrass may say or think."

"I have told you that it's a mistake about those signals, and it's a mistake about the money. Won't you believe that?"

"How can I—how can we?"

"And it's a mistake that you've made, in your notion that I hypnotized you and that the Hindoo hypnotized my uncle. That's all rot. You went to sleep while I was talking with you."

"Well, now, say," cut in Kirtland, "isn't it true that nobody but one whose mind is weak can be influenced by hypnotism?"

"That is true," said Reel. "And Jack ought to know that he's altogether too strong-minded to be influenced by anything of the kind, even if I knew how to do a thing like that, which I don't."



"I know what I know," Jack asserted, not pleased with the statements of Kirtland and Reel.

"Well, that's so," said Reel; "what I've said to you is so! And now the question comes up again. I'm going to Cranford, to stay there, I think. And are you fellows willing to meet me halfway as a friend, or are you going to be my enemies?"

"I'm sure I'm willing to be your friend," said Kirtland, in a meaning tone.

"Thank you for that, Kirt; you always were white, clean through!"

"If you can prove that what you've said is so—make us see that it must be—none will be more of a friend to you than I will," Jack declared.

"You'll have to take my word," was Reel's declaration.

Jack did not answer this. His former experiences with Reel Snodgrass inclined him to the belief that Reel's word was not worth much.

Jack was sure that Phil Kirtland had declared his willingness to be Reel's friend simply because Jack and Reel had had trouble. Kirtland was still "sore" against Jack on account of a number of things, and now and then he showed it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE POWER OF THE HYPNOTIST.

When Jack did not answer, Reel rose to his feet.

"I think I'd better be going; it will be dark soon."

"Reel," said Jack, now, "I have no desire to do wrong by you, or anyone. I've told you what I think of certain things. A good many of the boys have thought like me. Still, I don't want to be your enemy when you come to Cranford, and I won't be unless you force me to."

All things considered, this was going very much more than halfway.

Yet Reel sneered.

"I'm not begging for anyone's friendship! Mine is as good as yours, I think. It would be pleasanter for all the boys in Cranford to be on good terms, and I'd like it that way. But so long as you fellows think I'm a liar and a sneak, why, I guess we'll get on better by keeping apart."

He turned as if to go.

"You don't mind if I take this," he said, looking at the rattlesnake. "It's of no value to you, even if it was in your camp."

"Well, naow," Jubal cut in, "we might skin it and git the oil aout of it; I've heard that rattlesnake oil is a good cure for the rheumatiz and brings big prices."

Reel laughed sarcastically and the other boys smiled.

"I guess I'll take it along."

He looked at Phil Kirtland.

"Kirt, I'd like a few words with you, if you don't mind."

"Cert," said Kirtland, and started off with him.

"Jiminy crickets, there goes a pair of snakes!" Lafe grunted.

Brodie flushed.

"You don't refer to Phil?"

"Nothing of the kind, Brodie. I mean Reel Snodgrass and the snake he's carrying. There is nothing snaky about Phil; he's simply a good deal of a jack-ass."

"He's my friend!"

"That's right—stand up for him! But I can't help my opinions."

"You don't like Phil."

"Some things about him I like and others I don't. He'd be a nailing good fellow if he wasn't so jealous and so stuck on himself."

"That's what *you* think!" said Brodie, warmly.

While this little wordy war was on, Phil Kirtland was walking along the lake side with Reel Snodgrass.

"It surprises me a little bit that you're with that crowd," Reel was saying to him. "They're not good enough for you."

"Brodie is my friend," said Phil, feeling called on to defend Brodie, though he was pleased by Reel's flattery.

"Oh, yes, Brodie; I wasn't speaking about him. He's a fine fellow. I meant Lightfoot and his crowd. I don't think they like you very well."

"Most of them like me well enough; but I haven't always got on well with Jack. The trouble is, Jack Lightfoot wants to run everything. He has to be *IT*, or he won't play."



"I understood him the first time I met him," said Reel, using tones of flattery. "He doesn't like you because he knows that in so many ways you're his superior. You ought to be at the head of the Cranford nine, instead of that fellow."

"That's what I think, and it's what Brodie thinks. But when the nine was organized the voting went against me, because of the treachery of Wilson Crane, who, being an academy boy, was in honor bound to vote for me. He didn't, and showed himself a traitor and a sneak."

"Oh, yes, I remember Wilson! He's that gangling longshanks with the long nose and long neck. He looks treacherous. He stands up for Jack all the time now, I suppose?"

"Yes, all the time."

"And there's Lampton—he sneezes whenever Jack takes snuff. I don't think much of him."

"He's too lazy to have any original ideas of his own, so he follows Jack's lead in everything, and lets Jack do all his thinking for him."

"A precious crowd you've got there, with the exception of Brodie. As I said, it surprises me that you're out here with them, and hang with them so much while in Cranford."

"If I cut loose from them I cut myself out from baseball and things of that kind. Jack's got control of the nine for the season."

"You might organize another nine," Reel suggested.

"Yes, I—I might, but it's late now to get a nine together and drill them into shape so that they'd be good for anything."

"You ought to have done it earlier. I wonder that you didn't."

Phil Kirtland almost wondered himself now why he hadn't done that, so great was the flattery of Reel's words and manner. He began to have a poor opinion of himself because he had not, and a poor opinion of the boys at the camp, with the one exception of Brodie.

Yet in his better moments Phil Kirtland knew to the bottom of his heart that Jack Lightfoot was the natural leader of the athletic boys of Cranford, and the one person who had done more than all others to make the Cranford nine a winner on the diamond that season.

"What are you going to do with that snake?" he asked, made nervous by striking his foot and lurching against Reel, the motion causing him to throw out his hand, so that it came in contact with the cold coils of the rattler. "I wonder that you care to have it with you! I should be afraid of it."

"I'm used to such pets," said Reel. "You never examined a snake closely?"

"Only with a club, hammering them on the head."

"Well, a snake is a beautiful thing, when looked at closely; it's markings are regular and really beautiful. And the creatures have more intelligence than they're ever given credit for—a great deal more. And they're not such a bad kind as people think. There are more harmless snakes than any other kind. The rattler of course is poisonous; but he's got honor—he never strikes before giving warning. I've got a box up at the hotel and I shall put him in it and study him."

When they neared the hotel Reel invited Phil to come up and see his room, and Phil consented. He found himself liking this young fellow remarkably well, such was the result of the flattery.

When Reel had safely housed the snake in a box he sat down with Phil in the lighted room, where they talked over affairs at Cranford, Reel asking a number of questions concerning Mr. Snodgrass, his uncle.

Kirtland inquired about the Livingstons and Delancy Shelton, and Reel seemed to be very frank in his statements.

But he became somewhat silent by and by, letting Phil do most of the talking while he looked out of the window into the darkness.

There was a struggle going on in his heart.

Suddenly he turned round to Phil, and began again the flattering talk already used.

It was so pleasant for Phil to hear those honeyed words that he could have listened all night, and he listened a long time.

Finally he half started from his chair, though his movements were heavy.

"I—I think I'd better go home! I'm getting sleepy."

"No, stay a bit longer. Here I am a great deal



without company, and I find you so deuced interesting that I'm not ready yet to part with you."

Reel went on talking, while Phil sank back into his chair, the sleepy feeling oppressing him.

"Here is a queer thing," said Reel, "which we sometimes use in India when we want to charm a snake. If I'd had it with me to-day I'd have used it instead of that squeaky fife."

He held up a bright disk, which he set whirling in his fingers.

Phil had a strange feeling that he ought not to look at that disk, and that Jack Lightfoot had stated such a disk had been used in putting him to sleep at the time he claimed Reel had hypnotized him; but though Phil had this feeling he was not able to make use of it, and sat staring at the whirling, bright object, while Reel's voice droned away into a sort of singsong that sounded faint and far off.

Then, a little later, Phil sat in the chair with his eyes wide open and seeming to be looking at space.

Reel spoke to him.

"Now, understand this," he said, bending near him; "when you come out of this in the morning—you're to come out of it in the morning—you're to have no recollection whatever of it. When you go back to the camp, you're now and then going to throw things at Jack Lightfoot—little things, whatever you get your hands on. He will get mad, of course, and then you're to hammer the life out of him. Understand—you're to pummel him good. That will make him mad at you. Remember that I'm to be your friend from this on, and not Jack Lightfoot."

He snapped his fingers sharply, and with a start Phil Kirtland opened his eyes.

"Gee! I did fall asleep!" he said, staring about. "I must be starting back to the camp."

"It's rather warm this evening," said Reel, "and that's made you sleepy. I'll walk back part way with you, if you don't mind."

"Glad to have you."

Kirtland seemed as wide awake as ever, yet he had been thrown for a few moments into a hypnotic sleep. He had no apparent knowledge that anything of the kind had happened; and, strange to say, seemed to

have no recollection of that shining disk which had been whirled before his eyes.

If any reader thinks this is far-fetched, it can be said truly that this, to the trained and skilled hypnotist, is the simplest thing in the world.

Psychologists, men who make a study of the mind, tell us that we have a dual mentality; which is almost the same as saying that we have two minds. One of these is the ordinary state of consciousness by which we know what is going on and know what we are doing and planning and thinking. They call the other sub-consciousness, or the sub-conscious self, which means the under-consciousness.

This sub-consciousness is that part of the mind which directs the involuntary muscles, like the muscles which move the lungs, the heart, and other organs. Our hearts beat, our lungs breathe, yet we do not think about it; the sub-conscious mind takes care of that.

The subject is too long, interesting as it is, to explain fully here. But this much can be said. In hypnotism it is the sub-conscious mind that is aroused and put to work by the hypnotizer, while the ordinary mind seems to sleep. And it does things which the ordinary, conscious mind takes no note of. The sub-conscious mind becomes for a time the controlling power. This is a remarkable thing, yet true. We are just beginning to get glimpses into the inner chambers of that marvelous thing, the mind, and this is one of the singular things which have been revealed.

Reel Snodgrass, skilled in the tricks and the lore of the Hindoo hypnotizers and tricksters, had aroused the sub-conscious part of Phil Kirtland's mind, and had put the other part to sleep.

He had hesitated at first to do this, and would not have done it but for his belief that by what is called "suggestion" he could cause Phil never to remember what had been done.

Two things had strongly impelled him, the chief of these being Phil's boast that only weak minds could be so influenced. The other was a desire to stir up trouble between Phil and Jack Lightfoot, and so turn Phil against Jack and to himself—that is, to Reel.

He accompanied Phil to the stairs.



"Oh, wait for me a minute," he cried, "I've actually started without my hat;" and he ran back to get it, leaving Phil waiting on the stairs.

He did more than get his hat. He lifted the rattlesnake from its box and placed it beneath his coat.

"A fine night for a walk," he said, joining Phil. "I really hate to be stuffed into a room on such a night. A walk by the lake will be glorious."

Then they went downstairs together and out of the hotel.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW IT WORKED OUT.

The night was fine.

The day had been rather warm, but with the coming of night cool winds swept the surface of Loon Lake.

Overhead the stars glittered like diamonds. There was no moon, but the stars were so bright and the night so clear that the water of the lake was distinctly visible and the white hotel loomed like a great, snowy tent through the network of the trees.

They talked of the beauty of the night and of the lake as they walked along, and then again spoke of Jack Lightfoot and his friends.

A change in Phil's mood seemed to have come about, for when Jack was mentioned he showed irritation, whereat Reel Snodgrass smiled meaningly.

"He's no friend of yours, depend on it."

"No," said Phil, "he's my worst enemy. I've been a fool for having anything to do with him. I hate him."

"And he's just a common sort, compared with you. Your father is one of the richest and most respected men in Cranford."

Phil seemed to struggle with this thought.

"Yes, that's so; and I wonder that I associated with him."

"Who knows anything about Jack's father? You don't, do you?"

"He must be dead, I think. He left Cranford a long time ago, and nothing seems to have been heard from him since. Jack never mentions him, and is touchy if any one else does."

"That's what I heard when I was in Cranford. Anyway, Jack is your worst enemy. If you should give him a good thumping some time it would be the thing. I wonder you haven't thumped the very tar out of him long ago!"

Phil had tried that, with unfavorable results to himself; but he seemed to fall into the mood of the youth with him now, and agreed that he ought to have "thumped" Jack long ago.

When the vicinity of the camp was gained Reel stopped.

"I'll go no further," he said. "Those fellows don't like me. So I'll stop here. Good-night. We've had a pleasant evening together."

"Yes," said Phil; "good-night!"

And he walked on, leaving Reel standing in the path watching him.

When Phil reached the tents Reel advanced again, with stealthy steps, as if he desired to see what would happen.

Phil Kirtland had entered the first tent he came to, in which he found Jack Lightfoot and most of the other campers.

"Hello!" he cried, as if it surprised him to see Jack there.

Then he picked up a soft cushion—the first thing his hands fell on—and hurled it at Jack's head, fairly knocking him over.

The sight of Jack seemed to have given him a sense of ungovernable irritation.

Jack scrambled to a sitting position and looked angry and red in the face.

"Was that in fun?" he asked.

Phil sat down, dropping to the ground, and stared at him.

"You and I are not going to get on very well hereafter," he said, crisply.

His face was pale, and the spectators took that to be an indication that he was in a rage.

"You needn't go to throwing things at me!"

"I'll throw something at you that will hurt."

"What's up?" Brodie inquired, surprised himself at this turn in Phil's demeanor, and not favoring it, strange to say.



"Jack and I can't be friends any more."

"What have I done now?" Jack demanded, his temper leaping up.

"It's something that fellow has been saying to him," Tom declared.

"Did he say anything to you about me, to stir you up?" Jack demanded. "If you can't behave yourself you'd better leave the tent."

Phil made no attempt to depart.

He looked angrily at Jack, and then round at the other boys.

"It's this way," he said. "Jack has never done right by me. I ought to have been the captain of the nine and the leader of athletics among the fellows of Cranford. Jack cheated me out of that, with the help of Wilson Crane and Tom, both academy boys who ought to have stood by me."

"I voted for you," Tom declared. Then added: "But I wouldn't do it again."

"I thought that matter was all settled," said Jack, very red in the face.

"Settled to suit you, yes; but not settled to please me."

"This isn't any time to bring it up," Brodie protested.

"And I don't think very much of this crowd," said Phil. "It's a common crowd and not fit for a fellow like me."

"It's too good for you!" exclaimed Lafe Lampton. "If you don't like it get out of it; go pick a crowd to your fancy."

"By hemlock, that's right!" cried Jubal. "No-buddy's settin' on yeour clothes holdin' yeou here."

Phil subsided, apparently quelled by the outbreak he had provoked.

But he sat, eying Jack, and now and then turning to the others.

"I guess I'll take a walk," said Jack, trying to laugh and making a poor success of it.

He arose. Lafe Lampton did the same. And together they started to leave the tent.

As they did so Phil Kirtland caught up the light pine bat and threw it at him.

Jack's hot temper leaped to flame. This was too much. He was about to spring at Phil.

"Steady!" said Lafe, catching him.

"Am I to stand that?" Jack demanded, fiercely.

"Better come on out and cool off. Phil's lost his head to-night and wants to kick up a row."

Jack hesitated, while his heart pounded unpleasantly and the hot blood of anger sang in his ears. Then he secured a grip of himself.

"All right," he said, yielding to Lafe; and they left the tent together.

Tom followed them out; and Jubal, Wilson and some more of the boys came soon.

"What's the matter with Kirtland to-night?" one asked. "I never saw him act so."

"That villain, Reel Snodgrass, has been stuffing him with something," said Jack. "He wanted to fight, and I don't know but I ought to have accommodated him."

"This spoils the camping trip," said Tom.

"I'm afraid it does," Jack agreed.

"By hemlock, what could that feller been sayin' tew him tew change him like that all tew once?" Jubal asked.

"No one knows," Jack answered.

"No one can guess," Tom added.

They walked along the shore of the lake discussing the matter, all agreeing that something very unpleasant had been told Phil Kirtland by Reel Snodgrass to stir him up so.

Not one guessed the truth, that Reel had been working on Phil with his diabolical skill as a hypnotist.

Jack and his friends did not return to the camp for some time. When they did Phil Kirtland had rolled himself roughly in a blanket and seemed to have fallen asleep.

Brodie met them in front of the tent.

"I think Phil's got a touch of fever," he said, apologetically. "His face was very white, you know, and now his body seems hot and feverish. He's asleep, I think, for he didn't move when I touched him. He's been in the water too much to-day, and that's the trouble. I hope he isn't going to be seriously sick."

Jack's mood of anger against Phil instantly changed.

If Phil were sick and feverish, and that had occasioned his bad temper and irritable outbreak, Jack could overlook the matter, and none would be quicker to forget it.

"Had we better send for a doctor?" he asked. "I think there is one stopping at the hotel."

"Yes, if he's not better in the morning. Sleep's the best thing for him now. And, say, fellows!" Brodie's voice was sober. "I don't agree with Phil in the things he said to-night—not in all of them, at any rate; and he wouldn't have said them if his head wasn't



touched with fever. I know him too well to believe that he would. Why, Phil Kirtland always conducts himself like a gentleman, when he's at himself."

Phil *did* pride himself on being a gentleman, and the son of a gentleman, but that he always conducted himself in a gentlemanly manner was hardly correct, and nothing but Brodie's warm friendship and admiration for him could have made him say so.

"We'll try to forget the whole thing," said Jack. "If you think he needs a doctor we'll get him one. I hope, though, he'll be all right in the morning."

"And if he is he'll apologize to you. I know that." Brodie's thought was that he would make Phil offer an apology for what he had done if he were not disposed otherwise to do it.

Jack was to sleep in the tent where Phil Kirtland now lay.

This was not the tent which Phil had occupied the previous night, but Jack would not think of having him taken out of it, now that he had fallen asleep there and seemed to be sick.

So Tom Lightfoot, who was to have slept in the cot now occupied by Phil, trotted off to another tent; and Lafe and Jack soon went to bed, on the light canvas cots they had brought from Cranford.

As Lafe was falling asleep, he was aroused by a movement near him.

Phil Kirtland was slipping toward Jack's cot.

There was a strange, wild look in Phil's face and his extended hands seemed to be thrust out like hooked claws.

With a bound he sprang upon Jack, bearing him back on the cot with a furious clutch that settled his fingers in Jack's throat.

"Here!" yelled Lafe, tumbling out and rushing to the rescue.

Lafe was not slow in his movements now.

He sprang upon Phil Kirtland like a panther, and catching him by the throat began to drag him from Jack, whom he was choking severely. Jack was writhing on the cot, only half awakened and not knowing who or what had attacked him.

Lafe Lampton's cry brought up the rest of the sleepers.

The front of the tent was open and the sides had been lifted to let the air circulate freely, and through these openings a good deal of light came in.

Hence the startled boys could see what was going on, as soon as they were wide enough awake to see anything clearly.

Jubal Marlin, sleeping in this tent, leaped like a

flash to Lafe's assistance, though he did not yet know whom Lafe was attacking.

Between them Phil Kirtland was dragged back and thrown panting on the ground.

Ned Skeen struck a match, applied it excitedly to the candle, and then plunged the tent in darkness again by letting the candle fall.

Some one else with a steadier hand picked up the candle, which was not entirely extinguished, and, holding it up, illuminated the tent.

Jack was scrambling half blindly from the cot, not knowing yet who had assaulted him.

Then all eyes were fixed on the floor, where Phil Kirtland, rising on his elbow, lay panting and gasping.

"Do you want me to kick your head off?" cried Lafe, starting toward him. "What did you mean by that?"

Just then a wild scream came from the lake—an unearthly sound, indescribably weird and uncanny, as if it were the scream, or the laughter, of a fiend. It was the cry of a loon, one of the most startling sounds to be heard in the wilderness.

Before its echoes had died away, another cry broke forth from beside the tent—a human cry of pain and fear this time; and the tent door was darkened by a shaking human form.

The candlelight showed the startled, frightened face of Reel Snodgrass.

"I was just walking along by the lake," he quavered, "and I stumbled against the mate of the snake I captured this afternoon—and—and it bit me!"

The truth was that Reel, eavesdropping outside the tent, had forgotten the snake he had placed underneath his coat.

It had been chilled and made almost torpid by the chill of the box in which he had placed it at the hotel, but the warmth of his body had brought it to life and activity.

If he had not forgotten its presence he would have had no trouble in controlling it; but while listening to what was going on in the tent he failed to remember the deadly serpent. Then came the cry of the loon, startling him so that he let the snake fall.

It dropped to the ground as he knelt by the tent, and, coiling before he could rise, it struck its fangs into his leg.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CURING A SNAKE BITE.

A strange change came to Phil Kirtland when he heard Reel's cry and beheld his frightened face.



It was as if a key had been turned in some hidden lock in his mind and had opened a door through which he stepped again into his true self—into his normal consciousness.

The hypnotic spell, the influence, had passed like a flash.

Phil stared about the tent, gasping with amazement. He had no idea of what he had done or of what had happened. But he heard Reel Snodgrass explaining:

"Phil took sick up at the hotel, and I was so worried about him that I started down here to make some inquiry, when I stepped on or ran against that snake right out there by the side of the tent, just as I was ready to come in."

He was nervous and anxious as the boys gathered round him staring at the tiny punctures which the candlelight showed in his leg, where the fangs of the rattlesnake had gone. He had slipped up the clothing, revealing the wound clearly, and was fumbling in a pocket of his light coat for a bottle he knew was there.

Practical Jubal advanced cautiously to the door of the tent and was staring out, thinking he might see the snake and perhaps kill it.

He probably could not have seen it in the dark, and, anyway, the snake was crawling away.

The trouble with Phil had been made temporarily a smaller matter, as the boys looked at the snake bite and saw Reel dig the bottle out of his pocket.

Then he took out a keen-bladed knife, and with much nerve thrust the point into the wound, making the blood spurt.

Having done that, he poured some of the oily looking stuff from the bottle into the bleeding wound.

He rubbed it well in.

He produced another bottle, and, tipping it to his lips, he took some of it internally.

He smiled in rather a ghastly way.

"I've never handled rattlesnake bite before, but Borlmo told me these things would knock the poison, and now I've got to test it. Better not go out there, you fellows," he warned, speaking to Jubal and Ned, who were looking from the tent door; "the snake may be there yet."

He smiled more brightly, with returning confidence.

"It's funny I didn't think of that—that is, of the likelihood that the snake we captured this afternoon would have a mate that would be prowling round here. I suppose it was because I was so anxious about Phil."

He turned to Phil, who had, with strange interest, heard his explanation about his "sickness."

"Was I sick at the hotel?" Phil asked.

"Sick? Well, I guess so. You turned as white as a sheet and said you must hurry to the camp. I wanted to go with you, but you wouldn't let me. Thinking about it, I couldn't sleep, and at last started down here. How're you feeling? Better than I am, I hope."

"I feel all right; only my head's queer. I wonder what could have made me sick?"

"I can't guess."

"Nor I."

"You were in the water too much to-day," said Brodie, relieved to think that his guess about Phil's condition had been correct. "We were all in the water too much."

"Yet it didn't hurt the rest of you," said Phil.

"Anything I can do for you?" Jack was asking Reel.

Jack was anxious concerning that bite, and surprised by what he heard about Phil's sickness. He knew now that he had been attacked by Phil while lying asleep.

"You can't do anything," Reel answered. "I think I'll stick this knife in a little deeper, and work some more of this stuff into the wound."

He thrust the knife in again, without flinching, and poured in more of the oily substance.

"That ought to fix it!"

He took a few swallows from the bottle.

"Yes, that will make me all right," he declared, confidently. "I'll have a sore leg, I suppose, for a few days. But it won't be worse than that, unless Borlmo was mistaken, and he knows more about snake bites and their antidotes than all the doctors in America."

The boys looked at the leg and fancied that it was swelling.

It did swell to a considerable extent, and Reel groaned and writhed with pain.

But by and by the unpleasant symptoms were not so marked, and he seemed to be out of danger.

As for Phil Kirtland, he had in the meantime learned how he had come to the tent acting queerly and had insulted Jack and attacked him in his sleep. It was to him a most astonishing discovery.

"I don't think it could have been the water," he declared. "It must have been something I ate."

"Lafe, give an account of yourself!" said Jack, determined to put a bright face on the matter. "What have you been feeding to Kirt?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, then, it was starvation that troubled him!"

"I mean he had only what the rest of you fellows had," Lafe urged, somewhat hurt to think that any one could suppose he had not been careful in the cook-



ing. "He didn't eat enough to hurt him, I know. Why, he didn't eat more than half as much as I did!"

Whereupon the boys roared with laughter, and Lafe looked round to discover the cause.

It was wearing on toward morning before Reel Snodgrass felt able to return to the hotel.

He asked that a candle might be taken outside of the tent to see if the snake was near; and this was done, even though it had been done before.

Then he departed, and they heard him whistling as he disappeared. But the whistling was for effect, and not because he felt light-hearted.

"Jack," said Phil, somewhat humbly, "what the fellows tell me I did seems impossible, but I'm bound to believe them. I hope you won't think I could so far forget myself as to attack you when you were asleep, or at any other time without provocation. And the silly things I said, or they say I said, forget them."

"Forget it, forget it—and remember the *Maine*!" chirped Lafe.

No one was more willing to forget the whole affair, and to believe that Phil would not have done those things if he had been in his right mind, than Jack.

"But you feel all right now, don't you?" Brodie asked.

"Yes, and that's the funny thing of it; I don't feel as if I'd been sick a minute. At first my head felt queer, but even that has passed away. It was that dizzy, reeling feeling that a fellow has sometimes when he wakes up and don't know where he is. It wasn't a sick feeling at all."

"Too much bathing and swimming yesterday, I tell you!" Brodie insisted.

And for a time it was allowed to pass at that.

## CHAPTER X.

### JACK'S SUSPICIONS.

The boys slept late the next morning, and the sun was well up and shining warm through the trees before they rolled out of their cots.

Nat Kimball came to the tent door and looked gingerly around as if he half expected to see the snake coiled and ready to receive him.

"This is worse than germs," he said, speaking to Wilson Crane. "I think we'd better move the camp."

Nat was a germ fiend.

"I don't like the idea of snakes, myself," admitted Wilson.

Jack, having risen before them, was down at the lake plunging his head into the cool water, for he had not slept well and his head felt as big as a bushel measure.

Brodie Strawn came down and joined him.

"Brodie," said Jack, "I couldn't sleep very well last night, and I put in my time thinking over that matter—about Kirt, you know!"

"I thought about it a good deal, too," Brodie admitted.

He stooped at Jack's side at the lake's edge, and plunged his head into the water. He was dark-faced, with a somewhat heavy look about the head and jaws, and had dark hair and dark eyes.

"What did you think?" Jack asked.

"Nothing of consequence. Phil isn't up yet, and I'm hoping he'll show no signs of that sickness to-day. It was queer about that; but the water yesterday must have done it."

"I've come to another conclusion. I'll tell you what it is, and if you like you may tell it to Phil; he wouldn't like it if I said it to him. But in my opinion Reel Snodgrass did something to him—hypnotized him, I think, just as he did me that time. Phil doesn't remember about it, but that doesn't show anything. That's my opinion of what happened."

He called to Tom, who had appeared from his tent.

"I'll speak to Tom, if you don't mind."

"I don't think there's anything in it," said Brodie.

"But I may speak to Tom?"

"Yes, go ahead."

"Tom," said Jack, when Tom came down to them, "you've been reading up on hypnotism since the Hindoo came to Cranford."

"Yes, a little."

"Well, now, from what you've read, tell me if it wouldn't be possible for Reel Snodgrass to hypnotize Phil and cause him to act as he did last night?"

"Yes, I'm sure it would. That notion came to me, but I haven't said anything to anyone about it yet."

Brodie looked at Tom earnestly, while his dark face slowly crimsoned.

"You think Reel could have done that?"

"I'm sure of it."

"I don't think it would be wise for me to suggest it to Phil," Jack explained, "for you'll remember what he said when we were talking about the time that Reel worked the trick on me; he said that no one with brains could be hypnotized."

"Oh, it couldn't have been that; he must have been sick!" Brodie protested. "He says he was sick."

"He says he has no recollection of being sick; it was Reel who put that thought in his mind. I don't believe Reel came down here because he was anxious about Phil, but for some other reason. I don't know what it



was; but I think the snake that bit him was the snake he took away with him."

Tom looked startled now.

"You think he meant to use that snake against some one of us—make it bite some one of us?"

"I didn't say that; I said I thought the snake that bit him was the one he captured here yesterday. You've read about snakes, Tom. They don't move around at night. Last night was cool, and no snake would crawl out of its hole on a cool night like that."

"You're right, it wouldn't. It's too cool even this morning for a snake to be crawling round."

"I don't *know* that it was the snake he captured that bit him," Jack cautiously qualified, "but it seems to me it must have been. What he was doing down here with it I haven't the least idea. But I'm about certain—as certain as such a thing can be—that he hypnotized Phil and that was why Phil acted so."

Brodie was listening intently. This was a wholly new idea to him.

"Now," Jack went on, "you recall that Phil couldn't remember that he'd been sick and couldn't remember anything about how he got back from the hotel. We know that he wasn't sick, or, at least, didn't seem sick, when he went up there. None of the rest of us was made sick by being in the water yesterday, nor by what we ate. Just think it over."

Brodie's face went crimson again.

"Ginger! if I find out that Reel did do that I'll hammer his tricky head off!" he declared.

"I shan't say anything to Phil about it," said Jack. "I've told you, and you may tell Phil if you want to. Or, you may just let it drop. Don't tell him I said he was hypnotized. He won't like that."

"Well, it's queer enough," said Tom.

"He hypnotized me," said Jack, "and the Hindoo hypnotized Mr. Snodgrass. I'm sure of that. Is this any stranger?"

"No, it isn't," Tom admitted.

"I'll find out about this," said Brodie, in an angry voice. "I'll go to the bottom of this and know just what's what."

## CHAPTER XI.

### CATCHING A SUCKER.

Though the boys had passed a bad night, so far as rest was concerned, they were ready for the work and sport of the new day, with the exception of Phil Kirtland, who remained in the tent after breakfast.

He had eaten no breakfast, and said he did not feel well.

The truth is, that Phil was rather ashamed of his performances of the night, and he had also a queer feeling that the whole thing was due to Reel Snodgrass.

He disliked to think that he had fallen under the hypnotic influence of that clever young scamp from the Far East; yet, all things considered, he could not deny to himself that it looked like it.

Still, he tried to put the thought aside.

"Oh, I was taken sick!" he declared. "I feel shaky now, and that shows it. The boys must feel sore this morning about what happened, but if I was out of my head I'm not responsible for it. Even Brodie acts queer toward me."

So Phil stayed in the tent, complaining that he was not well, while the rest of the company planned various excursions and sports for the day.

Lafe wanted to go fishing, and Brodie and Jack went with him, the three finding a sheltered spot on the shore of the lake between the camp and the hotel, yet not in sight of either.

Here the land was pushed out into the lake a yard or so in a bold bluff that was fringed round with alders, with a tree near by making a shade.

The water was deep off the bluff, and Lafe had already tried this "fishing hole" with good luck.

They had fished an hour, landing a number of speckled beauties, when they heard voices close at hand.

"It's Reel and that dude," said Brodie, with a frown.

Though Brodie Strawn and his close friend Phil Kirtland were rather partial to fine apparel, and sported canes at times, yet they had not the sickening, dudish ways of Delancy Shelton, being a different sort altogether. Neither liked dudes, and just now Brodie was feeling that he hated the whole tribe so much that he would have been glad to whip any specimen that came his way.

"They're coming here," said Lafe, pulling his line out of the water.

Jack sat still, listening to the words that reached him.

"And they're talking about Phil," he announced.

Brodie laid his hand on Jack's arm, and touched Lafe with his foot.

"Will you boys do me a favor?"

"Glad to," said Jack.

"Then, just keep still, and don't let those fellows know we're here."

He took his line from the water, and Jack did the same with his.



"If they don't know we're here," Brodie explained, "and are talking about Phil, we may get to hear something interesting."

"Jiminy crickets, you're right!" Lafe whispered. "Say, I'm asleep! Wake me, if I snore."

He leaned back with his head under the fringe of alders and closed his eyes, but opened them again almost instantly.

They were as blue as the lake or the sky above the lake, and when his face was not tanned and burned by the sun as now it was as fair as a girl's.

Brodie and Jack also drew back under the screen of the alders and waited in silence.

They had not long to wait, for already the voices had reached them so distinctly that words could be made out.

Without a thought that anyone was lying beneath the alders on the very shore of the lake, Reel Snodgrass and Delancy Shelton sat down beneath the tree but a few feet away and continued their conversation.

"I'd like to knock his head off, don't y' know!" Delancy was heard to say, his words immediately after showing that he referred to Jack Lightfoot.

Reel laughed softly.

"Well, it was fun, and worth it, even if I have got a mighty sore leg to pay for it. I was squatting outside of the tent while it was going on, and the way that fool flung things around and cut up his antics was as good as a show."

"If he don't—aw—tumble to it that it was you who worked it!"

"Oh, he won't! He'll never think of that."

The scratching of a match was heard, and the scent of a cigarette drifted to the boys in concealment.

"Have one!" drawled Delancy.

"Thanks," said Reel, and lighted the cigarette with the same match.

"These Egyptian Princesses are fine," said Delancy, drawing the smoke into his lungs and letting it float out slowly from between his lips. "There's only one trouble with them, don't y' know."

"What's that?" said Reel. "I think they're fine. You haven't an extra box of them with you?"

"Yas, here's one; they're good, y' know! But the trouble with them is, y' know, they make a fellow's fingers so stained—a regular tobacco color, don't y' know! Why cawn't they get up a cigarette that doesn't stain a fellow's fingers?"

"I suppose it's the tobacco in them does that. Ever smoke one of those Oriental water pipes?"

"Nevah."

"Well, they're great. I'll have to show you mine one of these days. But cigarettes are all right for a regular thing."

"You aren't going down to the camp this morning, I suppose? Deuced common crowd down there, don't y' know!"

"I think I'd better keep away to-day," Reel laughed. "I'm afraid I haven't increased my popularity there." He laughed again. "Oh, you ought to have seen that fellow last night, when I was working him! Too bad you missed that."

Brodie's dark face had become crimson.

There could be no reasonable doubt as to whom Reel Snodgrass meant. Here was proof which could hardly have been furnished in any other way, that Reel had hypnotized Brodie's warm friend, Phil Kirtland, and made him play the fool.

Jack saw the flush on Brodie's face and saw that Brodie could not long contain his growing rage.

"Shall I stir them out?" he whispered.

Lafe was lying on the bank on his back, with his blue eyes fixed on the blue sky, a smile on his round face.

"All right, stir um up," said Brodie; "and then I'll climb that scoundrel's frame."

With a smile Jack gave his rod a flirt, throwing the line with a quick motion round under the tree where the two boys from the hotel were sitting. He meant the motion to be such as might be made by an awkward fisherman in jerking his line from the water.

To his astonishment a howl came from beneath the tree, followed by a scream of pain, as Jack tried to withdraw the line.

The pull on it told him that, by the merest chance, he had hooked something, when he had not thought of doing anything of the kind. The scream startled him.

Leaping to their feet, Brodie, Jack and Lafe scrambled from the alders and appeared before the two youths by the tree.

What they saw was almost bewildering.

Delancy Shelton was clawing at his mouth, while Reel Snodgrass was looking round in a startled manner.

The thing that had occurred possessed certain elements of the ridiculous, painful as it was to Delancy.

The hook had struck against Delancy's face and had cut through his lip, where it was held by the barb. No fish ever taken from the lake was more securely fixed.

Jack saw at a glance what had happened, and he rushed to Delancy's assistance.



"Ow! don't—d-d-don't!" Delancy stuttered, hardly able to speak, while he danced about, holding his hands to his mouth.

"Let me take a look at it."

Delancy removed his hands.

Jack saw that the hook had caught so solidly that it could not be drawn out; so, with a quick motion of his strong fingers he broke it in two, and, drawing the ends out, removed it.

The dude clapped his handkerchief to his throbbing and bleeding lip.

"I must beg your pardon for that," said Jack, with sincere regret. "It was a pure accident. I was careless, I know, for I never thought of such a thing. But you're all right now."

Delancy, as soon as he could stop dancing with pain, took a small mirror from his pocket and surveyed his wounded lip.

"Won't that be a blooming sight?" he cried. "It will swell all up, don't y' know, and I'll look like a fright."

He put down the mirror and glared at Jack.

"I think you did that purposely!" he shouted. "You tried to do that!"

Then he picked up his cane and flourished it, but began to get behind Reel Snodgrass.

Lafe wanted to laugh.

"I've always heard that you can't catch suckers with a hook," was his thought, "but Jack caught one that time."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A CONFESSION.

Brodie Strawn was giving his entire attention to Reel Snodgrass.

Reel looked as if he would have been glad to be almost any place else just then, for he was sure the fellows beneath the alders had heard his incautious talk and boastings.

There could be no doubt of it, when Brodie shouted at him:

"I heard what you said!"

"What did I say?" said Reel, backing away.

"That talk about Phil and about hypnotism."

"I haven't mentioned Phil nor spoken the word hypnotism since coming to this place."

Literally this was true.

"Just the same, I know what you meant; and now do you know what I'm going to do to you? I'm going to make you confess that whole business right here, or I'll hammer your miserable head off."

Delancy had by this time got well behind Reel Snodgrass, where he swung his cane defiantly.

His lip was still bleeding, and was swelling. At times he applied his handkerchief to it.

"Hit him, Reel!" he shouted.

"You come out and hit me!" said Brodie, with infinite contempt.

"I'd be a fool to fight you for nothing, and with your friends here ready to back you," said Reel, still seeming inclined to retreat.

"You needn't trouble about my friends; they'll not mix in it. This little trouble is between you and Phil Kirtland."

"You're not Phil Kirtland."

"No, but I'm his friend, and I stand for him now, since he isn't here. You worked some of your infernal and devilish tricks on him last night. That's straight, isn't it?"

"It is not."

"I heard you say as much right here—all of us fellows did."

"Aw, hit him, Reel!" chirped Delancy, swinging his cane.

"You didn't understand what I was saying. I wasn't speaking of Phil."

"You're a liar, for I know better!"

"Aw, hit him, Reel; don't let him call you a liar!"

"There's one thing you can do," said Brodie, his dark face aflame; "you can acknowledge to me in the presence of these fellows that you did work a trick on Phil last night, or you can take a licking."

Reel Snodgrass was not a coward.

"You think you can give it to me?" he asked, with a sneer. "If you want to try it, and can keep your friends out of the mix, come on."

It was an invitation Brodie Strawn could not resist.

He lunged at Reel.

Reel ducked and side-stepped lightly, and planted a stinging blow on Brodie's cheek.

Reel knew a good deal about fighting.

"Aw, that's right!" shouted the dude, dancing about and swinging the cane, while now and then he dabbed the handkerchief to his mouth. "Hammer him, Reel! You can do it! Hammer him!"

The ease with which Reel had ducked and evaded him irritated Brodie.

He was of heavier build than Reel and not so light on his feet. He had calculated, too, that it would be an easy thing to punish Reel. He was discovering right at the start that he might be mistaken.



Reel, his face very red now and his eyes shining, dodged and fainted, and Brodie again rushed at him.

Jack and Lafe, standing off at one side, had no intention of interfering. This was not their fight, though they would have interfered if Delancy had sought to assist Reel, a thing that was not likely to occur, for Delancy had pretty well shown his caliber already.

"Hit him, Reel!" Delancy yelled, hopping about like a toad on a hot skillet.

Reel ducked again, as Brodie struck at him, then planted another blow on Brodie's neck.

But it was a good deal like hammering a bull.

Brodie was big and heavy and he could take a lot of punishing.

He began to see that Reel knew something of the science of fighting, and that if he expected to whip him he must first be able to hit him. This brought a cooling of Brodie's boiling anger. A man mad with rage can never do himself justice in a fight.

So Brodie, after receiving a few stinging blows, learned craftiness.

He uncovered his guard, and when Reel swung in again, thinking he had found an easy opening, leaning in to deliver the blow, Brodie's heavy right smashed into his face, knocking him down.

It was so heavy a blow that Reel tumbled backward blindly, and for some seconds did not rise.

Delancy Shelton looked so terrified that at first it seemed he meant to take to his heels, when he beheld his friend and supposed invulnerable champion lying flat on the ground, pale and panting and apparently not able to rise.

"Stand up and face me again!" said Brodie.

Reel rose to a sitting posture.

"I refuse to fight you. You're heavier than I am, and I'm weak, and lame in the leg where that snake bit me. I was a fool for fighting you at all, but you made me hot."

"Well, there's one thing you will do," said Brodie, with merciless severity, "you'll acknowledge that you got Phil under your influence last night!"

Reel staggered to his feet, and put his hand against the tree.

Delancy swung his cane, but kept well back where the road would be clear for flight.

"Aw, punch him again, Reel!" he begged. "He cawn't really whip you, y' know!"

"That's straight, isn't it?" said Brodie, addressing Reel. "You did that to Phil?"

Reel was still silent.

"It's straight," Brodie repeated, "that you hypno-

tized Phil last night and made him go down to the camp and make a jackass of himself?"

Reel was saved from an immediate answer by a ringing laugh.

Lily Livingston came upon the scene, laughing, appearing suddenly from the path that ran by the lake side.

The boys had been so interested in the fight that they had not heard her advance.

She stepped between Reel and Brodie.

"Fie!" she said, putting up a slim finger.

Brodie flushed.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Livingston," he said, touching his cap; "but this is a little matter that Reel Snodgrass and I have got to settle."

"Why, the idea of young gentlemen like you fighting!" She stamped her foot merrily and tried to laugh. "It's a ridiculous notion. Now, if you have a dispute I'll be the umpire and settle it. I umpired a ball game yesterday and know all about it. Now, I'm judge and jury and lawyers and everything. What are you young gentlemen quarreling about?"

"Quarreling!" said Delancy. "Bah Jove, that's a good one! Miss Livingston, they're fighting, don't y' know."

"Fighting! Why, I'm surprised!"

"Not so much as she pretends," thought Jack. "She must have seen something of the fight herself."

"Have you been fighting, too, Delancy?" she asked, observing his swollen lip and bloody handkerchief.

"Naw, I was caught, don't y' know?"

"Caught?"

"Yes, caught with a hook, y' know, just like a fish, bah Jove!"

He wiped his lip tenderly.

"You ran a hook through your lip?"

"No, *he* did."

He swung his cane belligerently toward Jack.

"Well, I never!"

She stared as if she could not comprehend, and yet Jack was almost positive he could detect a twinkle in her roguish eyes.

"But this fight—or quarrel—must come to an end now," she declared, again turning to Brodie and Reel.

"He jumped on me," said Reel; "I'm not wanting to continue it."

"Miss Livingston," said Brodie, "that scoundrel worked some kind of hypnotic trick on Phil Kirtland last night. He denies it, but I know that he did, for I heard him saying as much to that other fellow there when they did not know we were listening."



"Then you were eavesdropping!"

"Call it what you please," he answered, defiantly. "We heard it. He says it isn't so. I say that he lies! He lies, and he knows that he lies!"

For an instant the girl's face paled. She saw that Brodie was terribly in earnest and terribly angry.

"Aw, hit him, Reel!" chirped the dude, swinging his cane. "If he says you lie, hit him!"

No one paid any attention to his antics, not even the girl.

For an instant she hesitated, then spoke again.

"Now, see here!" There was a smile on her face and her voice was once more sweet and pleasing. "We are all Cranford people, and we *must* be friends. I'm going to like every one of you; and Reel will be there in Cranford and you must treat him right. Reel is my friend. We must all be friends, don't you see?"

"Let him answer my question!" said Brodie, angrily.

"I'll answer it," said Reel, "by saying that you are mistaken."

"But we heard you talking about it!"

"Oh, Reel, tell him yes; say that you did hypnotize Mr. Kirtland, and have this thing over with."

Reel saw that this was a loophole which the girl had cleverly made for him.

He could say "yes" now, and later could claim that in saying it he had not meant it.

"Oh, well, all right; I did it!"

He tried to laugh, but there was no merriment in it.

"You acknowledge that you did it?" said Brodie.

"Yes; of course."

Brodie took a step toward him, his face again flaming.

"Aw, hit him, Reel!" the dude shouted.

Brodie stopped and let his uplifted fist fall.

"All right," he said; "let it go at that!"

"Now that's what I've been wanting you to do!" cried the girl. "I want you to get over this quarreling habit. Think how much nicer it is to be friendly. The person who is angry can't be happy. Didn't you ever think of that?"

Brodie stood red-faced and silent.

She turned sweetly to Jack and Lafe.

"Can't I depend on you to help me to keep the peace?" she asked, laughing. "It's dreadful hard being an umpire. I've rendered my decision, and no one seems to be satisfied. Reel has confessed to his wickedness; and yet there isn't peace."

There was something very bright and contagious in Lily Livingston's smile. Jack felt it, and so did Lafe. It will be remembered that even Ned Skeen, who

"hated girls," could hardly feel, while under the influence of her smile, that he "hated" this girl.

"I'm willing to do the best I can," said Jack, smiling back.

"Oh, you're an angel! And now——"

She glanced about, and her eyes lighted on Delancy, who was again putting the handkerchief gingerly to his lip.

"Oh, yes, Delancy, I've forgotten that your lip must need some attention! Come, I'll go back to the hotel with you, where you can see a doctor. Was there any bait on that hook when you bit at it? And you, Mr. Snodgrass, won't you walk with me?"

In another moment she had these two in tow and was in the path with them.

"Let them go!" said Brodie, glaring at the two youths who, one on each side, were moving along with her toward the hotel. "But I want them to keep away from me hereafter."

"Which they'll never do," said Jack. "If those fellows go to Cranford there'll be more trouble, and I know it."

"Which they're going to do," said Lafe. "But let's get back to camp and tell this story; and—wait—I'm forgetting the rods and lines, and the fish! Those fish must be cooked for dinner."

He picked them up, drawing them out of the water where he had "stung" them, and admired them as he held them up, licking out his tongue as if he could already taste them.

"Say, fellows, those will cook fine! We'll have another big dinner to-day; and I'm anxious to begin on it. Don't you know just how these fellows will smell in the pan? The very thought of it makes me hungry."

So they went back to the camp, where Phil and the other boys heard a story that was calculated to give them food for a good deal of talk.

And there, while Lafe got ready for cooking dinner, they talked not only of Reel and his companions at the hotel, but of the further sports and fun they were planning to have while on this trip into the wilderness.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 21, will be "Jack Lightfoot's Disappearance; or, The Turning Up of an Old Enemy." Here is a rattling story, which opens with an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" show, dogs and all, and holds some startling surprises for the reader before it ends. It would spoil the story for you to tell you who the "enemy" is and how it ends; you must read it to find out. You are sure to like it.



# A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

Next week we shall start another department, under the heading of "How To Do Things," conducted by "An Old Athlete," in which our essays upon timely athletic topics will appear, as our Chat columns are being crowded with the large number of letters received.

## THE PITCHER'S TEAM WORK.

When you have practiced until you feel you have control of the ball, can put it where you want it and handle a decent curve or in-shoot, you are ready to take your stand in the box. Now you face a new proposition, playing an actual game, and you will find your work is different, and harder, than you thought.

You may have been thinking the pitcher was the whole thing, and did all the work; and that little was expected of him except to stand in the box and plug balls into the batsman. If you did think like this, you find out differently before your first game is two innings old.

A pitcher must work hand and glove with his catcher. The catcher has a great advantage in play, because he faces the field and can size up the bunch better than the pitcher, whose back is turned to a good two-thirds of the playing ground. Have a signal system with the catcher, so that he can tell you how things stand, and the kind of ball to play; that system can be arranged in a variety of ways, but however you have it, have one. Pitcher and catcher working together can clean up many a nice score.

Study fielding. Learn to receive as well as deliver, and to catch on the run as well as any other fielder. Bunts are frequently resorted to by all batters nowadays, and the pitcher is usually in the direct line to handle these. If the pitcher does not know how to handle himself to take these, his effectiveness is diminished.

Know your own men on bases. Stealing is as favorite a trick as ever, and you must learn to throw to bases as well as to the plate. You should study to do this without altering your swing, to plant the ball to first, or even to second, with the same motion as to the plate. To be able to do this quick is to be able to catch your opponents napping, one of the chief features of baseball.

Study the men at the bat and trick them. Some men

bat low, give them high balls. Some bat high, send them low ones; some men seem unable to judge a curve, give them a variety of curves and keep them guessing; some men are afraid of in-shoots. In brief, if any individual batter has any peculiarity of play, play on that particular weakness. But beware of the steady, easy-going, never feazed man. Don't try any tricks on him, because you'll get left.

Nowadays we hear a great deal about "cross-fire" and the "spit ball." The first, in the hands of a clever pitcher, is almost a no-hit no-base play every game. The second is one of those novelties that no one really understands, and no one can ever guarantee success in its working. The "spit ball" is what its name implies, a ball on which the pitcher has deposited some of his precious saliva—in plain words, the pitcher spits all over the "outside" of the ball. On a "spit-ball" curve, for instance, the outer side of the ball is covered with saliva and the inner side is dry, producing in the hands of one who understands how to use it, a much wider curve than a dry ball would take on. Chesbro, of the New York Americans, who is the greatest "spit-ball" pitcher in the game, says himself that he cannot always gauge such a ball; sometimes the curve is very wide, sometimes it isn't. As a matter of fact, the "spit ball" seems to be produced by Chesbro himself, more by some peculiar twirl he gives the ball just before he lets it slide over his fingers than by anything else. It is a very uncertain play at the best. Late last season Chesbro almost equaled "Cy" Young's great no-hit no-base game by use of the "spit," yet in a game early this season three "spits" proved three-baggers. You see, if the master can't control "spits" any better than that you had better leave them alone.

"Cross-fire," on the other hand, is not a trick with the ball, but clever playing, and playing that any pitcher can pride himself on, for it requires judgment and observation. In technical language, cross-fire is to change the angle of delivery, to pitch one ball from the upper left-hand corner of the box and a similar one following it from the lower high-hand corner. The change in position is hardly noticeable, but the change in the placing of the ball for the batter will amount to several inches, and since he can hardly detect the fact that the pitcher has moved two or three inches, he is nonplused by the behavior of the ball. Suppose you send a batter an out-curve standing square on your plate; he makes a strike. Then you send him the very same kind of a curve, but standing to the right as you deliver the ball. The slant will now carry wide of the plate, but the ball will seem the same to the batter and, profiting by his past experience, he will prepare to receive it as he should have received the first. Consequently, he will be fooled and may be unable to hit the ball at all. Study of the players will open up to a brainy pitcher countless varieties of the play, and he will have an excitable batter completely at



his mercy, and keep the cool boys guessing. To an amateur, no feature of the pitcher's craft will be of more profitable study, and after you have got into your work you will find big success in using "cross-fire" frequently—whenever you can, in fact.

In these three short talks we have endeavored to give you a little idea of the work you have before you if you want to train yourself as pitcher. These suggestions will prove of value if you use your brains. One thing is sure, no man can be a pitcher who won't work and won't study. Baseball has been reduced to a science, and even an amateur cannot expect satisfaction unless he studies his play. It's no use to take up a game, anyhow, unless you go in to make a success of it, and if you don't intend to put your best wits to work, don't play. Use common sense and judgment, study—and don't put all your time on baseball. But for the few hours a day you put in on the game, do your best.

I missed the first two numbers of ALL-SPORTS and would like to get them. Can you tell me how I can get them? I want to have the complete series, as I think they are the finest boys' stories I have ever read. My father has always forbidden me to read most boys' stories, but after he looked over two of ALL-SPORTS, he said I could read all those healthy stories I wanted to. Please tell me about those first two numbers. Wishing you every success,

ROBERT WILLIAMS.

Highland Falls, N. Y.

Ask your newsdealer, Robert, to get those copies for you, and he will write to the proper department. The American News Company always keeps back numbers, and will supply them to dealers. We are glad to hear that your father approves of Mr. Stevens' stories. They are written to interest healthy American boys, and provide them with the right sort of reading.

I suppose you receive a great many letters from readers in praise of Mr. Stevens and his stories, and so my letter will be nothing new. But I have enjoyed these stories so much that I thought you might like to know that I have showed my copy of ALL-SPORTS to half a dozen of the fellows in our town, and that they all like them as well as I do. They are the right sort, just the kind of stories we boys want. Jack Lightfoot is all right and so are the others. As for the sneaks, we have a couple out here that it seems to us Mr. Stevens must have known. I hope you keep right on telling what the Cranford boys do. I should like to know how Jack and his friends occupy the summer. We boys out here have great fun camping out and having swimming contests and such. I should like to see how Jack and his friends would enjoy themselves that way.

We are forming a baseball club out here, and I should like to have you give me some hints as to carrying our plan out. I think this information would be valuable to lots of boys, and I hope you will give us some advice on this subject.

Hoping you will not consider this letter intrusive,

Constant reader,

Salem, Wash.

F. C. BARTLETT.

You may be sure, F. C. B., that your letter is no intrusion. We like to hear from our boys, and are always

glad of any praise. We are but mortal, and praise is sweet. We are sorry to hear that you have the models of Ben Birkett and the others out there. They are, as you say, sneaks, and deserve the contempt of every honest boy. Glad to see that your friends think our stories as interesting as you do, and we hope you will also find them valuable. In regard to Jack and his friends during the summer and fall, we can't give secrets away, but you may be sure such wide-awake American boys will be doing something interesting all the year round. We should like to hear particulars as to your camping out, swimming contests and so forth, so write us again, telling what you do. In regard to your baseball club, you will find in the various numbers of ALL-SPORTS full instructions on this subject, written by an expert, which will be a feature of this publication during some of the summer months. Every boy can find profit in reading them, even though he may not aspire to become a great player.

I have not seen a letter from any boy in Missouri about ALL-SPORTS, so will write a few lines to let you know that the boys here are all reading your paper, never miss a number, and we think, as everybody else does, that it is the grandest paper published for boys. There are three boys in the office where I work, and we are all so enthusiastic and want to read each copy first that we each buy one. My mother was very much opposed to my reading "nickel novels," but I persuaded her to read an ALL-SPORTS, and now she likes the stories almost as well as I do and reads them every week. She says a boy cannot make a mistake who follows the lessons taught by Jack Lightfoot. Wishing success to Mr. Stevens, and to the Winner Publishing Company, and anxiously awaiting the next number,

PAUL C. JEPSON.

St. Louis, Mo.

Thank you for your interesting and enthusiastic letter. May you, your mother and your friends long continue to derive pleasure and profit from that library which brings with it more of profit and pleasure than all others, the ALL-SPORTS!

I think you are doing a fine thing for the American boy. I think your stories of hockey, baseball, camping out, and in fact the whole book, is fine. I look forward to the Cranford boys playing football and basketball. When Jack finishes school, I hope to see him and his chums go to college. Is Jack ever going away from Cranford? I would like to see him in Canada hunting moose. I think your baseball stories are fine; also, your hockey stories. Hoping to see this in print, I remain, yours,

KENNETH MATTHEWS.

Huntsville, Ala.

You will find Jack and his cousin, Tom, doing many splendid things in the season to come. The author has already thrown out several hints about a projected visit to Canada during the winter season, when the carnival time at Montreal is in full swing, and if this happens, look out for royal sport.



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